



FLORIDA

Berkshire County



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NARRATIVE

Narrative

The Town of Florida is a village on the summit of the Green Mountain range, in the northwest corner of Berkshire County. Quiet and peaceful now, the town was once a boom town as the staging site for construction of a tunnel through Hoosac Mountain. It is largely bordered by the Deerfield River and is a succession of hills and valleys containing some of the highest peaks in Massachusetts. Winter is long and cold in Florida and during the Revolution when a band of troops tried to cross over the mountain in winter they almost perished of cold and exposure. The first settler in Florida was Dr. Daniel Nelson from Stamford, Connecticut, who arrived in 1783. The doctor came by horseback from Longmeadow and settled on a homestead on the Deerfield River. The town may have chosen its name, some historians conjecture, because at the time it was named the most general topic of conversation was the purchase by the United States of the territory of Florida from the Spanish. A tourist guide to the Berkshires of 1889 describes the town as having elevations of 1,000' to 1400' and of containing drives that "are grandly panoramic". From the top of Hoosac Mountain the view shows Mt. Graylock, Mt. Adams, the Hoosic River, villages, railroads and towns spilling down the slopes of the hills. Florida contains one of the famous waterfalls of the Berkshires, the Twin Cascades.

Florida's first boom time came in the second half of the 19th century, when in order to complete the rail link between Boston and West, the railroad had to bore a tunnel through Hoosac Mountain to North Adams. After surveys were completed in 1850, work began at both ends of the tunnel. The tunnel, when completed, was 25,081' or 4 3/4 miles long, most of which is contained within the boundaries of the Town of Florida. More than a 1,000 men worked day and night on the tunnel, and it took four years to sink the 1,000' long shaft that bored straight down into the bowels of the mountain and over 20 years to finish the tunnel completely. In 1875 the first trains moved through the 20' high, 24' wide engineering marvel which required the removal of 1.9 million tons of rock at a cost of \$14 million and 195 lives. In more recent times the lure of fishing what has been described as "the Number One trout stream in the county" has drawn sportsmen to Florida. Recognized as a superior trout fishing stream by the state's Department of Fish and Game, the Florida section of the Deerfield River is very wide, from 25' to 150' wide and contains brown, rainbow and brook trout. Residents in the late 1930's claimed that fish caught in Florida from the Deerfield River were larger than those from anywhere else in the Berkshires.

(Narrative compiled from historical materials)



GEOGRAPHY

Location

Northwestern Massachusetts, bordered by Stamford, Vermont, and Monroe on the north; Rowe and Charlemont on the east; Savoy on the south; and North Adams and Clarksburg on the west. Florida is 28 miles north of Pittsfield and 127 miles northwest of Boston.

Total Area: 24.56 sq. miles

Land Area: 24.36 sq. miles

Population: 742

Density: 30 per sq. mile

Climate

(National Climatic Data Center)

(Great Barrington Station)

Normal temperature in January.....20.1°F

Normal temperature in July.....68.1°F

Normal annual precipitation.....44.8"

U.S.G.S. Topographical Plates

North Adams, Rowe

Regional Planning Agency

Berkshire County

Metropolitan Statistical Area

(1993 Definition)



GOVERNMENT

Municipal Offices

Main Number: (413) 662-2448

[Telephone Numbers for Public Information](#)

Form of Government

Board of Selectmen
Executive Secretary
Open Town Meeting

Year Incorporated

As a town: 1805

Registered Voters (Secretary of State 1994)

	Number	%	
Total Registered	455		
Democrats	117	25.7	%
Republicans	52	11.4	%
Other parties	0	0.0	%
Unenrolled Voters	286	62.9	%

Legislators

[Senators and Representatives by City and Town](#)



DEMOGRAPHICS

Table DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000

Geographic Area: Florida town, Berkshire County, Massachusetts

[For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see text]

Subject	Number	Percent	Subject	Number	Percent
Total population.....	676	100.0	HISPANIC OR LATINO AND RACE		
SEX AND AGE			Total population.....	676	100.0
Male.....	353	52.2	Hispanic or Latino (of any race).....	3	0.4
Female.....	323	47.8	Mexican.....	-	-
Under 5 years.....	31	4.6	Puerto Rican.....	3	0.4
5 to 9 years.....	40	5.9	Cuban.....	-	-
10 to 14 years.....	65	9.6	Other Hispanic or Latino.....	-	-
15 to 19 years.....	51	7.5	Not Hispanic or Latino.....	673	99.6
20 to 24 years.....	12	1.8	White alone.....	656	97.0
25 to 34 years.....	84	12.4	RELATIONSHIP		
35 to 44 years.....	124	18.3	Total population.....	676	100.0
45 to 54 years.....	107	15.8	In households.....	676	100.0
55 to 59 years.....	42	6.2	Householder.....	265	39.2
60 to 64 years.....	26	3.8	Spouse.....	174	25.7
65 to 74 years.....	60	8.9	Child.....	206	30.5
75 to 84 years.....	29	4.3	Own child under 18 years.....	163	24.1
85 years and over.....	5	0.7	Other relatives.....	12	1.8
Median age (years).....	39.8	(X)	Under 18 years.....	3	0.4
18 years and over.....	506	74.9	Nonrelatives.....	19	2.8
Male.....	262	38.8	Unmarried partner.....	11	1.6
Female.....	244	36.1	In group quarters.....	-	-
21 years and over.....	484	71.6	Institutionalized population.....	-	-
62 years and over.....	110	16.3	Noninstitutionalized population.....	-	-
65 years and over.....	94	13.9	HOUSEHOLD BY TYPE		
Male.....	44	6.5	Total households.....	265	100.0
Female.....	50	7.4	Family households (families).....	197	74.3
RACE			With own children under 18 years.....	87	32.8
One race.....	671	99.3	Married-couple family.....	174	65.7
White.....	659	97.5	With own children under 18 years.....	75	28.3
Black or African American.....	4	0.6	Female householder, no husband present.....	13	4.9
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	3	0.4	With own children under 18 years.....	7	2.6
Asian.....	3	0.4	Nonfamily households.....	68	25.7
Asian Indian.....	-	-	Householder living alone.....	60	22.6
Chinese.....	-	-	Householder 65 years and over.....	26	9.8
Filipino.....	-	-	Households with individuals under 18 years.....	90	34.0
Japanese.....	2	0.3	Households with individuals 65 years and over.....	70	26.4
Korean.....	1	0.1	Average household size.....	2.55	(X)
Vietnamese.....	-	-	Average family size.....	2.99	(X)
Other Asian ¹	-	-	HOUSING OCCUPANCY		
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	-	-	Total housing units.....	294	100.0
Native Hawaiian.....	-	-	Occupied housing units.....	265	90.1
Guamanian or Chamorro.....	-	-	Vacant housing units.....	29	9.9
Samoan.....	-	-	For seasonal, recreational, or		
Other Pacific Islander ²	-	-	occasional use.....	15	5.1
Some other race.....	2	0.3	Homeowner vacancy rate (percent).....	1.2	(X)
Two or more races.....	5	0.7	Rental vacancy rate (percent).....	11.1	(X)
Race alone or in combination with one			HOUSING TENURE		
or more other races: ³			Occupied housing units.....	265	100.0
White.....	659	97.5	Owner-occupied housing units.....	249	94.0
Black or African American.....	6	0.9	Renter-occupied housing units.....	16	6.0
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	6	0.9	Average household size of owner-occupied units.....	2.61	(X)
Asian.....	3	0.4	Average household size of renter-occupied units.....	1.63	(X)
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	-	-			
Some other race.....	7	1.0			

- Represents zero or rounds to zero. (X) Not applicable.

¹ Other Asian alone, or two or more Asian categories.

² Other Pacific Islander alone, or two or more Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander categories.

³ In combination with one or more of the other races listed. The six numbers may add to more than the total population and the six percentages may add to more than 100 percent because individuals may report more than one race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.



HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Home Sales (Banker & Tradesman) -

[Town Stats - Free market Statistics](#)

Subsidized Housing Units (DHCD 1998)

[DHCD Subsidized Housing Inventory](#)

Subsidized Housing Units: The number of housing units which count toward the municipality's 10% goal for low- and moderate-income housing. It includes both subsidized affordable units and market rate units in certain eligible subsidized developments.

Public Housing Units (DHCD 1999)

Conventional State: 0

Conventional Federal: 0

Rental Assistance(DHCD 1999)

State (MRVP: 0

Federal (Section 8): 0



TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS

Florida is situated in Berkshire County, a region of hills and low mountains that widen to create the Berkshire Valley in the south. The major cities and towns are linked together by U.S. Route 7. North Adams and Pittsfield are major points of entry for rail freight into Massachusetts, and the region has several commercial airports. Public roads and highways meet the requirements of modern transportation.

Major Highways

The principal highway is State Route 2, which runs E-W across northern Massachusetts.

Rail

Freight service is available from the Springfield Terminal Railway. Contact number: (508) 663-1073

Bus

Florida is not affiliated with a regional transit authority.

Other

Harriman & West Airport, a General Aviation (GA) facility located in the neighboring town of North Adams, has a 4,300'x 100' asphalt runway. Instrument approaches available: None.



CULTURE AND RECREATION

LIBRARIES

[Board of Library Commissioners On-line Library Catalog](#)

MUSEUMS

(American Association of Museums)

None

RECREATION

[Telephone Numbers for Public Information](#)

Recreational Facilities (Recreational sites and activities)

[Department of Environmental Management Recreation Section](#)



MISCELLANEOUS

HEALTH FACILITIES

(Dept. of Public Health 1992)

Hospitals

None

Long Term Care

None

Hospices

None

Rest Homes

None

UTILITIES

[Telephone Numbers for Public Utilities](#)

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NOTE: The COMMUNITY PROFILE draws information from a diversity of sources. The main source of information is listed under each section. In some instances comments submitted by the municipality were incorporated to correct and/or enhance the information obtained from the main source. However, no changes were made to those data bases which must be consistent throughout the state. DHCD has made efforts to ensure the accuracy of all data in the COMMUNITY PROFILES, but cannot take responsibility for any consequences arising from the use of the information contained in this document.